[A Visit with Henry Mitchell]

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Maine 1938-9

Maine

Living Lore

Old Town - 1 Dup.

A VISIT WITH HENRY MITCHELL, AMERICAN INDIAN,

CANOE MAKER AT HIS HOME

(As Related by Robert F. Grady)

Henry Mitchell, an American Indian, canoe maker, lives on the Penobscot Reservation on Indian Island in a small one and one half story house painted red but in need of a fresh coat. It sits on the side of a hill on Indian Island, and on a road recently improved by a small crew of Indian WPA workers. The road curves down around a shore of the island. A group of skaters were enjoying the skating down below. Between Mitchell's house and one of the main roads on the island is the small bright yellow school house.

When I got over to the part of the island where Mitchell lives I found him shoving cordwood through the basement window of the school of which he is the janitor. When he found out what I wanted he invited me over to his house out of the cold. We were alone at first except for my small boy, but later his wife and daughter returned. Linoleum was tacked to all the floors of the rooms and the rooms were all papered and painted. There was a Heatrola type of heater in the room. None of the pieces of furniture were expensive, but

all were clean, neat, and in good repair. For a short time the present governor, Horace Nelson, was there. I have included Nelson's pertinent remarks in the write up.

Any writeups of interviews at the home of Henry Mitchell wouldn't contain such colorful expressions as “ugh” or “[?]”. They all use very good English. Henry, Jr. was graduated from the Old Town High School and the University of Maine. Before going to Maine he studied for a year at Holy Cross. In athletics he was outstanding as a weight 2 thrower and track man. In speaking of his daughter, who graduates from the high school this year, Henry, Sr. said that she had “expressed a preference for a business career.”

Mitchell's wife was out when I called, but she returned while I was there and joined in the conversation. She wanted to know if they would get paid for supplying me with information but instead of saying “What about um pay?” she said, “Would there be any compensation for this?” I told her that I thought the information was worth very much, but that nobody would make enough money out of the proposed book to even commence paying for it. I told her, though, that if I wasn't broke when the book was published, I would attempt to get a copy for her.

That point she brought up in worthy of consideration, I think.

I gathered that the Indians felt a bit flattered when writers first started to go over there to get information for use in books about the race, but lately they have been wondering if they aren't deserving of a share in the profits of a book. I suppose that is only a natural reaction.

I felt so pleased because of the way I was treated over at Ovide Morin's home, that I promised them a copy of the book when it was published. I think people like them, who supply information willingly and without thought of profit, deserve more than thanks, but I'm beginning to hope that the book won't be a very expensive volume. I talked with the Mitchells quite a while and right up the final 15 minute period I felt sure that I would have

to look elsewhere for an informant. I think it was only the promise of a book that turned the scale.

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Mrs. Mitchell is well educated and is a keen minded and able woman. She said that they were all pretty well occupied during the day, but that I could go over any night after supper “except beano night” which occurs once a month. I believe she is a sister of Governor Howard Ranco who supplied us with so much information last summer when I was writing about the Indians. She is something of the “club woman” type and is probably about forty-eight years old.

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PERSONAL HISTORY OF HENRY MITCHELL, AMERICAN INDIAN

Henry Mitchell is an American Indian born on the reservation at Old Town in 1884. His family consists of a wife and three children: two boys and one girl. Mrs. Mitchell is a graduate of Carlisle and president of the Women's Club of the reservation. Henry, Jr. graduated from the junior high and is employed now in the canoe shop. Edwin graduated from Old Town High and attended Holy Cross for one year. He majored in electrical engineering at the University of Maine and graduated from that college a year ago. He was outstanding as a track man and with the weights while at Maine.

Henry, Sr. went to school on the reservation during the years between 1889 and 1898. He would have graduated from the Old Town High in 1902 but left in his junior year to enter Carlisle. He was graduated from that college in 1905.

During his school days he spent vacations in Lewiston, Pa., Ashbury Park, N.J., and in Old Orchard and Bridgton, Maine. He worked for two years in Derby, Maine 1906-07 and since that time has lived in Old Town. He worked in the railway shops in Derby and the Canoe Shop in Old Town.

He was a very good baseball player and I guess he could play a very good game now. He used to play football. Has played in a band for years. Very good musician. He and his wife make baskets.

He and his wife and children are Catholics. He is of medium height. Has very black hair and dark brown eyes. Very heavy shoulders. He is a very intelligent and is an interesting fellow to talk with.

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THE LIFE OF HENRY MITCHELL, AMERICAN INDIAN, CANOE MAKER

(As Told By Himself to Robert F. Grady) Mr. Mitchell: “[?]. Well let's go over to the house where it's warmer. There are some people coming up here next month to investigate the red paint deposits. You must have seen the account in the paper of the digging up of those [?] by the WPA road workers. That hill right over there (pointing to the Oak Hill section) is full of them. Those people are going to publish a book about the discoveries.

“Well I ought to know something about canoe making. I worked in that shop a good many years. But last year I couldn't get in there. I went to Perley (Cunningham, the manager) and went to him, but it was no use. When a man gets to be over fifty they toss him out in favor of a younger man. This is the machine age, and I suppose employers think that young men can keep pace with machines better than older men. Over here in the woolen mill one girl can run four looms that it used to take four men to run. They've been able to cut the crew away down.

“I suppose I am getting old. My hair is black, but all my folks had black hair. Henry, my boy, worked during the college vacation season in the canoe shop the last year I worked there, but he couldn't get a job there last year either. (Perhaps Henry was mistaken in thinking that his age hindered him in getting work in the canoe shop last year. Age played no part in the failure of his son to secure work there, for he is a youthful giant. Last year

was a “bad year” at the shop, but this year shows promise of being a good one and Henry, Sr. may get his job back again.)

“It's hard to get a job here anyway, even for a young man. He has to go away if he wants to get anywhere. Henry studied electrical 2 engineering at the university, but he can't get work in that line here. He worked with a crew of surveyors over on the road in Milford for a while, but he got laid off when the work was finished.

“I got this little job as a janitor at the schoolhouse, and I don't know what we'd do without that. It's government work. I thought I could go back in the canoe shop last year during the summer when the work at the school would be light and let my wife attend to the janitor work, but as it happened she didn't have to.

“My girl will graduate from the high school this year, but I don't think she'll go to college. She has expressed a preference for a business career and I think she shows good sense. She is taking the commercial course. If a girl intends to get married - as most of them do - I suppose four years in college wouldn't help her much with the work in the kitchen.

“I suppose I know as much about canoe making as anyone over here, but there are some people who know a lot more about Indian lore than I do. Peter Dana is interested in that work. (Peter, however, so Henry said is only thirty-eight years old.) Leo Shay is back, and Ted Mitchell would be a very good man to talk to. (Ted is only forty five.) My wife will be back in a little while and we'll see what she says. She is interested in writing and in Indian history. There is a German professor named Steigel, or something like that who is coming over here to get some help in writing a book in the Abaski Language.

“You see I'm so danged busy. It seems as though I've got something to do all the time. Hello, maybe this man could tell you something. This is Horace Nelson, our present governor. He worked in the canoe shop just as long as I did. (Nelson, who had entered the house while we were talking, took a chair and started to roll a cigaret.

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Nelson attended some college, but whether it was Harvard, Dartmouth, or Carlisle, I can't remember. He is a small, bronzed man whose hair is also very black. Perhaps because of his lack of size and his air of martyrdom, he has always reminded me of Mahatma Gandhi. He is about fifty five. He explained the proposition to Nelson.) H. Nelson: “I'd be glad to help, but I simply haven't the time. I'd like nothing better than to be able to sit down and talk a while, but I can't stay five minutes. Do you know what I've got to do now? I've got to go out and haul some wood. Do you think there's any justice in denying wood to some people and furnishing it to others? All prepared for the stove besides. There was enough money appropriated at the last session of the legislature to supply every family on the island with fifteen cords of wood. Perhaps they thought that because I had two sons working it made a difference. They told me that there was plenty of stumpage out here. Stumpage! They don't talk about stumpage when they haul wood all prepared to some people over here. It's not this fellows frault down here. (Edward Hanco's) He's doing the best he can. I have the authority to get that wood, though, and by the Holy Moscow I'm going to get it! But you see I have to haul it myself, and if I wasn't the governor, I couldn't even do that.”

(Howard Hanco, ex-governor, is at present the head of the welfare department of the island. Just what the government is supposed to supply to the Indians, I don't know, but it seems as though Nelson, as governor, ought to have plenty of authority. Evidently Hanco wanted Nelson to go out and cut wood - or have it cut for him - rather than to take some of what was already hauled, but Nelson as governor, exercised his authority to obtain some of the prepared wood. Personally, I think Hanco, who is a very fair-minded chap, was in the right.

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Shortly after Nelson left, in a decided huff, Mrs. Mitchell returned. She is about forty eight or fifty, and is as large an Nelson is small. She has gray hair and plenty of color in her face. For the third time that afternoon I explained my business over there. I had a long and

very interesting conversation with Mrs. Mitchell, but for some reason I find it hard to give a verbatim account of it. She asked me a lot of questions about the work, and we discussed authors and books for a time. She spoke of some literary club she belonged to and told me of the work they were doing. She mentioned a Mary Ellen Chase, who, she thought, was writing a book - or had written one - about Indian customs. I think she said the Chase woman lived around here, somewhere. Mrs. Mitchell said she was much interested in the history of her race, and wished she had more time to go deeper into it. She was interested in the discoveries relating to the Red Paint People, and looked forward to reading what was written about them.

Henry and I got together in the living room and after I had explained what we wanted we got to work. Mr. Mitchell: “Well, I was born on the reservation here in 1884. I started going to school on the reservation when I was six years old. That would be in 1890. The island school was at that time a parachial school and it was run by the church until about 1899. The government runs it now. The sisters still teach there but I think that is only because they can get them cheaper. Of course they have to be capable and accredited to teachers. There is nothing taught now about religion until after the regular school day is over. The pupils who want to study that have to remain after the others go home.

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“I went to the Old Town High School but I left there after the junior year to go to Carlisle. That school has been discontinued. You had to be appointed to go there. Senator Frye and Professor Chamberlain of Harvard helped me to gain admittance. I played baseball and football during my school years and for some time afterwards on a team on the island here.

“I've played in bands ever since I was old enough to blow a horn. One summer vacation season while I was at Carlisle I got a job at the Baldwin Locomotive Works at Lewistown, Pennsylvania. I played in the band there and on the ball team. During another vacation season I played ball in Ashbury Park, New Jersey, and I also played in the band there.

Some of my school vacations were spent at Old Orchard and Bridgton, Maine, where my father worked. He worked in a curiosity shop in Old Orchard [?] 1892 to 1900. I think a fellow named Hackey ran the place. From 1903 until 1905 he worked as a laborer in Bridgton, Maine in the creamery or milk factory of Tom Douglass. From 1905 to 1910 he worked in a oilcloth factory in Winthrop, Maine. At the end of that time he came to the reservation here.

“When I got through the Carlisle I went to work in the car repair shops in Derby, Maine. I guess about all they wanted me there for was to play in the band and on the ball team. I worked in the pattern shop there and sometimes, counting what I got for playing ball and playing in the band, I got as much as forty five dollars a week. I was married in Milo by Father Hayes. Rents and living expenses were high, though, in Derby and I was about the only Indian there. We lived in Derby for a few months after we were married, but as my wife was feeling a little lonesome and as I got the idea that I could get along just as well in Old Town, we came back here. I had worked in Derby 6 just two years. Some of us fellows may look as though we have hayseed behind our ears, but a lot of us have been around places.

“It was in the spring of 1906 that we left Derby. I went to work in the canoe shop then and, except for last year, I have worked there ever since. Sometimes, of course, during dull seasons I worked at odd jobs, but I couldn't remember just what years they were. I worked for Conners, building sidewalks, and for Foley in the ground wood mill. I went up on the boom several summers when I was a school boy. I got fifty cents a day there.

“I don't remember exactly when the Old Town Canoe Company was started. Carleton was in business before they were. I know that Henry Hanco helped them to make their first forms. Henry was supposed to get $1000.00 for that, but as it happened he didn't get a nickle. One of the Carletons died and the other, who didn't know much about the business sold out to the Old Town Company. That old, red building that Carleton used to make his

canoes and boats in, used to be right opposite the ferry landing. The Old Town Company had it hauled up where it is now.

“Al Wickett was the superintendent in the canoe shop when I went to work there. He's out in the middle west now. We went to work at 6.30 in the morning and worked a ten hour day. They introduced a piece work system about the year I went to work and although the hours were long, we made good pay. Thirty six to forty dollars a week. That was too good to last, of course, and after five years of it they began to cut the pay. It was really Sam Gray's (the owner) fault, but we always blamed the French Canadians. They came in here by the carload. Sam knew he could get them for less money, and he did. A lot of the Indians lost their jobs, but, of course, he had to keep some of us. There was a picture of an Indian on the outside of their catalogue, and the book told about how the patient Indian craftsmen constructed the successors 7 to their birch bark canoes. Sightseers need to come in and sometimes one of the women would say, “Oh, I want to see the Indians!” Sam would look wise and lead them around to where a few of us were working and say, “To be sure. Here are a few of them right here. We would never be able to run this place without them, I assure you.”

“Sam got us thinned out pretty well. He'd come over to some of us and say, “Well boys I'm sorry to have to lay you off, but we have heavy taxpayers here, you know, and we feel that we should keep them at work.” It sounded well, but the people he was refering to never owned a nickle's worth of real estate in Old Town, and probably never will.

“Under the piece work system they finally got us down to where we had to work overtime to make even a living wage. Even the Frenchmen began to kick. They had so much trouble that they put us back on day work. We made about three dollars a day then. In 1934 and 1936 we made about four dollars a day. The hours were cut to eight about the time the ERA went into effect, but when the supreme court declared that unconstitutional, the hours were lengthened again to what they are now — nine.

“You remember Brown, the efficiency man? Sam put him in there. I think he was some relation to the Grays. There was a young fellow just out of college telling old canoe makers how to go about their work. It was funny, but Sam never got around to the point where he could see the joke. Brown was responsible for some worthwhile innovations there. He recommended blowers in the basement and ventilators and exhaust fans in the color room, but any dumbell could have told Sam about the need for those things long before Brown came here. Sam should have known about it himself.

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“Brown changed over the guide model. He changed the straight bow and stern into impossible curves that brought a howl from the old guides themselves. The canoes looked something like the old Mic-mac models - something like this: The wind used to catch in those curved places and they were a nuisance generally. The company lost no time in getting the straight ends back on the guides. They dubbed Brown's model the Charles River Canoe, but it never became very popular.

“After Brown got through turning things upside down everywhere else, he got around to Hymie's room (the filling room). They used to fill a canoe, you know, and let it dry slowly for four or five days before the next filling coat was put on. Then the canoe would have to dry from three to five days longer. That, of course, was as it should be. However Brown must have been reading up on ceramics, for he says to Hymie, ‘Have some drying bins put in here. Ten days to dry canoes is unheard of! We've got to speed that up a lot.’ They got the bins built and got them all fitted up with steam pipes, and they shoved in the canoes. It took only four hours to dry them in the bins. There was some talk about Sam going to appoint Brown General Manager and handing him a few blocks of shares.

“They got a big order of 500 canoes from Macy that year and they broke all records getting them out. It was all due to the drying bins that Brown thought up. About two months after the last canoe was shipped they commenced to come back. They warped and cracked ribs

and splintered gunwales. Some of them had places where big gobs of paint, a foot across, had dropped off. There were 275 came back out of 500.

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“Sam, I guess was sorry that the old custom of burning people at the stake had died out among the Indians, or he would have turned Brown over to us with orders to give him the works. As it was —laws being what they are — the best he could do was to fire Brown without ceremony.

“The Indians before my time didn't work much on the other side (in Old Town). About all there were then were saw mills, and there were plenty of whites to run those. The old Indians used to hunt, fish, and serve as guides. They made birch bark canoes and baskets. They didn't get any food allowances from the government as they do now. Living conditions, of course, weren't so good. There were more shacks, no electricity, no city water. We've had the lights for two years now. Almost every house has a radio. The members of older generations didn't care much about the looks of the places they lived in, but now we want things to look as good as possible.

“There used to be some bad actors over here. There are some now, but not so many. I was in Lawrence Morin's store about a year before he died and he said to me, “Henry, as long as I've lived here, I've never been on that island.” I invited him over to visit us and he did come the next Sunday. He said he was surprised to find it was so much better over here than he supposed it would be. We have people call on us who have money. They don't come to see how the other half is getting along, but because they have friends here that they wish to call on.

“We aren't obliged to live here. Harry Hamilton lives over in Milford, and [?] owns a house over there. He told me he wasn't obliged to pay taxes because the government doesn't collect taxes from Indians. [?] (I can't remember those names) owns a home over in Old Town, and several other Indians live over there.

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“I own this place here and there's quite alot of land goes with it. I have another house over in [Oak?] Hill (a section of the reservation) and some land near it where we plant a garden. My wife owns Hardwood (?) Island [up?] the river a ways. We cut our wood there. This house looks all right but we're going to remodel it next year. We'd like to have another story on it so we could have sleeping rooms upstairs.” (The house has four rooms all on one floor: a bed room, a kitchen, a living room, and a small extra room. Only Miss Mitchell lives with her parents.)

[R.G.?] “How is it, Henry, that some of you fellows have more land and property than others? I thought that the government allowed each of you a certain amount of land and no more.”

H. Mitchell: “The government does, but there's nothing to prevent us buying land from each other.

“As far back as I can remember we've eaten about the same foods as the whites. [Dietary?] habits change slowly and I guess they were all changed by the time I arrived on [the scene?].

“There was an epidemic of cholera here but that was long before my time. (This epidemic was described in one of the essays I wrote last summer. John Nelson described it to me.) About thirty years ago some of the younger Indians here contracted tuberculosis. A number of them died. That wasn't because of unsanitary conditions as some people supposed; it was due to the coming here of Indians from Canada who married into the tribe.

“This intermarrying of whites and Indian is something I definitely don't approve of, although under certain circumstances it might be all right. Love, I suppose, is something that can't be controlled. The trouble is that the whites that the Indian girls marry represent the 11

owest and most worthless of the race. And when they do marry one of our girls they don't take them over there to live. No, they plant themselves down here on us. I suppose they think it's an easy living, with the government supplying everything. They find out we have to work like every one else. Some of the white girls who marry Indians are all right, and I suppose it is only natural for them to come over here to live with their husbands.

“My wife and I are Catholics. When I was a young fellow that church used to be filled every Sunday. Practically every one here was a Catholic. About twenty years ago there was some trouble in the church or with the priest. I never found out just what the trouble really was.

After that they started going to other churches. We have Baptists, Methodists, Universalists, and for all I know, Holy Rollers. The Catholic church is never more than half filled now.

“Say this outline doesn't apply to Indians very well; it's mostly about French Canadians. We ought to [?] one about Indians and we could get along easier. I should think shorthand would help you too. That is something that I would like to learn. My girl is taking it up, and I think it's a good thing to know.

“We lost only one child. We were over visiting her aunt and she and another girl were playing at the head of the stairs. It seemed as though they got out of our sight just for a minute. There was no bannister on the stairway and my little girl slipped over the edge of the floor and fell to the hall floor below. Her skull was cracked right down here. (From about the top of her head to a point over the eyebrow). She was five years old at the time.

“We had Dr. Simmons from [Bangor?] - he's dead now. He told us that she would live thirteen or fourteen days, but that not many people could 12 live with their skull cracked like that. He said there was a very slight chance for her if an operation was performed,

but if she lived afterward, she could be a [hopless?] idiot. He thought that letting her die without an operation was the kindest thing that could be done. She lived just thirteen days.

“Of course it shocked us terribly. A parent who has seen one of his children die has passed through an experience what he will remember. But God knows best. He looks down from up there and sees all these things. All we can do is to carry on as best we can and try to [smile?] when the going is toughest.

“Now Mr. Grady I've answered all your questions and I wish you'd answer one of mine. What is back of all this, anyway? Are they preparing to slip something over on the poor red man or is the government trying to check upon employers to see if they are making proper returns on social security? My wife and I talked this over today, and we couldn't think of any other reasons why this work should be going on. How about it?”

R.G. “Henry, some of the French Canadians I talked with thought the government was trying to check upon the status as citizens. You can see that the idea is far fetched, but it didn't help me any. So help me, the motive behind this is benevolent rather than sinister. If it wasn't, papers [like?] the Bangor News would have given us the low down on it long ago. This work is going on for the same reason that good roads are being built on the island here. Tools and supplies have to be bought for that work, and the people who do the work have money to spend for their needs. It may not be an awful lot, but it's better than nothing at all. Some senators may say that the method is all wrong, but even they admit that a sincere effort is being made to help the unemployed.”

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(When I first entered the room I noticed a long hardwood log lying on one side of the room and at the edge of a rug. The log was about ten feet long and about six inches in diameter. It wasn't there when I called a few days before. I knew they couldn't be drying it out to saw up for use in the heater, but I couldn't account for it in any other way. After we got

through with the interview Henry got up from the rude little home made desk and called my attention to the long stick.)

H. Mitchell: “This log here is one that we're drying out for use in basket making. When that is dry the boys will take it out and beat it for about an hour. Before that, by the way, the bark must be all taken off with draw shaves. That beating loosens up the fibres. Next we run it through a machine that is made with an old clock spring. We can gauge it so that any width of fibre can be cut. We dye them in almost every color. We start making baskets now to sell next summer. There is one behind the stove there that the dogs sleeps in. (It was shaped like the body of a small, baby carriage.) I have a few in the next room - just a minute - I'll bring them out. If you come over here next week you'll see a lot more of them in this room.

(There were about twenty baskets, ranging in size from small ones costing twenty five cents, to ones as large as shopping baskets that sold for $1.25. They were all very neat and pretty. Some of them made of different colored fibres arranged in patterns. Some were made of hardwood fibre and South American grass.

Henry wasn't trying to sell me a basket, but the boy wanted one of the small ones to hold crayings in, and Henry gave him his choice of three of the small ones for twenty five cents. The boy picked 14 out the largest of the three - a basket about five inches in diameter and three inches deep. He afterward discovered that it was marked 35 cents instead of 25 on the bottom, and he called Henry's attention to this, “That,” Henry said, “is the summer price. My boy, when you get anything marked 35 cents for a quarter, don't say a word.”

He explained to us how the basket was shaped over a form and how the form was removed when it became necessary to narrow the basket at the top.

A basket may look to be a very simple article, but any one looking at those frail, brightly colored, and cleverly woven little baskets, some of which rested on the hardwood log,

would wonder how it was possible to produce such delicate objects from hardwood that looked to be as unyielding as a bar of metal.

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THE LIFE OF HENRY MITCHELL, AMERICAN INDIAN CANOE MAKER.

(As told by himself to Robert F. Grady) Mrs. Mitchell: “Before you and Henry get to work I want to show you two of the dolls I'm making. We make these as novelties to sell with our baskets. This one is an Indian brave, and this is his squaw. They are wearing buckskin moccasins, but I haven't made their clothes yet. This man will have a little blanket and feathers in his hair, and the woman will have beaded garments and a little papoose in a basket on her back.”

(The stuffed dolls were about seven inches high and they were covered with brown cloth. The features were painted on and the hair was made of black yarn.)

(By this time Henry had placed the little home made stand in the center of the room under the light. He was careful about placing a Webster's Dictionary, two pencils, and some sheets intended for a loose leaf ledger on the stand even though I always brought my own pen and paper.)

(Before Henry and I got to work I explained to him that the small boy who was with me came over for the purpose of getting a basket like the one his brother bought a night or two before. Henry produced the basket and filled it with peanuts.)

“Sit right in this little chair, fatty,” he said, “and read your book and eat those peanuts. i want you to help me celebrate my birthday. I'm forty-nine today.” Mrs. Mitchell: “You'll never see forty-nine again.” Henry: “I think I will. You know they say, ‘A man is as old as he feels.’

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“Well, Mr. Grady, the Indians around here have never been what you could call farmers, although nearly all of us have large gardens about our homes. We don't get so much from the government as some people think we do, even though we are treated fairly enough. We get seed, and we're allowed something on the crops we raise, but if we don't work for a living like every one else, we don't live very well.

“We pay no direct, or property tax, but on the other hand we don't share in things that taxes help to pay for - police protection, fire protection, etc. We have our own police force, fire department, and political system. There are a lot of things we don't get unless we pay for them - clothing, amusement, lighting, water, etc. Our fuel is cut on our own land. If any one wants a radio, a lamp, or a rug, he simply has to pay for it. We have felt the depression like every one else. Before the war a lot of us used to go to the seashores every summer to sell baskets, but very few of us go now. The people aren't buying them.” Mrs. Mitchell: “I guess they aren't. I can remember when the old people used to go down and sit on a porch near the ferry landing most of the day during the summer vacation season. All the amusement they had was watching the ferry boat going back and forth, or the people on the other side going along the road. So many were away at the seashore selling baskets. A lot of the men would be away, too, when they used to have drives.”

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Henry: “Yes, and after they had finished on the drive they'd line up at the boom and race down river to the landing in their boats. We had a [cannon?] here on the island that we used to fire when they got in sight. Some of the men looked like Jesus Christ They-” Mrs. Mitchell: “Henry!!!” Henry: “Well, they did. They had long beards half way to their waists. They looked like those House of David basket ball players that are playing the Redskins (professional champions of Maine) over here tonight (in Old Town). The House of David boys will probably just look lousy on the court, but the river drivers really were lousy.

“We never had any societies over here such as the Foresters or the Odd Fellows. I guess the priest tried to organize a [sodality?] once, but I never heard much more about it.

The Carlisle Indian Training School - we never called it Carlisle College or University - was two miles outside of Carlisle, Pennsylvania. That town had a population of about 11,000 when I was there. [Dickinson?] College and the Irving School for Girls was also near there. Why Carlisle was discontinued I don't know. After the war the government closed it and transferred the 1300 students to Haskell out in Kansas.

“I could tell you a lot about Carlisle, but there wouldn't be any use doing that because nobody would want it raked up and nobody would want to print it. All I'll say is that the instructors treated every one pretty rotten, and I'd prefer to forget that part of it.”

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Mrs. Mitchell: “Mr. Porter was especially mean.” Henry: “There's one thing about Carlisle that I like to remember: that is the football team. Football has changed a lot since I played, but it's still a great game. They've done away with the old mass formations and the flying wedges and the type of trick plays that Carlisle teams used to specialize in. The Indians got the credit for those, but it was old Pop Warner that doped them out. That is Pop in the back row in that picture on the wall. He looks like a young man there. Pop is coaching now at Temple and according to the papers he's doing a fine job.

“When I started out there the handle bar mustache era was just going out. They used to get out on the field wearing those big mustaches and side whiskers. They wore their hair long and parted in the middle. I guess everybody has heard of those trick plays the Indians used. One of them helped to beat Harvard. We had to use a new trick every year because they changed the rules to outlaw them. Once one of our men scored a touchdown against Harvard by running with the ball tucked under the back of his sweater. Another year we had [head?] guards that looked like halves of footballs, and once we had them painted on our jackets. There was a rule that prevented a coach from ordering a play, but one year

Pop had numbers painted on the backs of the players on the bench. That was before they stared to number them. The quarter back used to keep an eye on the bench, and if he saw men wearing numbers 7, 6, and 2 standing up, he knew that Pop wanted that play. They fixed that rule, too."

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Mrs. Mitchell: (handing me a faded photograph) "Do you know who that girl is there?"

(I looked at the picture of the slim, dark-eyed girl whose hair was arranged in a high pompadour, and was obliged to confess that I couldn't connect it with any one. The girl in the picture sat near a large harp that occupied one end of the photograph. There were four rows of girls - all with their hair arranged in the pompadour style, and all - or nearly all - holding mandolins.) Mrs. Mitchell: "Well, that was me. That is a picture of our mandolin club. People said we played very well. I played - or tried to play-the harp, and they must have thought I did all right for they kept me in the club. Those girls came from different tribes. There were several Penobscots. That girl was a Comanche, she was an Iroquois, and that girl was a [?]. This girl right here was an Eskimo, and so was she. There four girls were very wealthy, but these over here, including me, didn't have much money.

"The only books I know of about the Indians are A Sketch of the Penobscot Indians, by Florence Shay, of the reservation, and Life and Traditions of the Red Man, by Joseph [Nicola?], my grandfather. What Florence wrote was issued in pamphlet form and it had a small circulation. My grandfather's book is in the library over here. (The Old Town Library.)

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"The story of Nicola is quite interesting. He was a boy of 16 when the War of 1812 was progressing. The English never had much use for the Indians, and any of the red men who lived along their line of march were in danger of losing their lives. One night Joseph's mother woke him up and said, 'Hurry, Jo. Get up and get dressed! The Red Coats are coming! Go out through the woods and try to hide. Keep out of their way. After the Red Coats have gone by come back.' When my grandfather returned from his hiding place he

found his home burned and his parents lying on the ground, dead. He was taken in by some white people, named Lavalle, who lived near there, and he was brought up by them. The Lavalles where French. Joseph learned to play the violin while he lived there. The Lavalles wanted him to stay with them, but when he got to be twenty-one he felt that he ought to get out and work somewhere. Just where he went and what he did I don't know, but when he was twenty-six he came here to live. He was our representative for a time, and he wrote some of the laws we have now. Let me see - he did when I was fourteen, and I'm fifty-two now. You see I'm giving my age away." Henry: (Figuring it up on paper) "He must have died in 1901.

"I think Orson, who painted that picture in the church, is entitled to some mention. (That painting was described in an essay I wrote last summer) It says on that card in the church that picture is 125 years old, but my father said it must be all of 200 years old."

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Mrs. Mitchell: "We give little plays over here in our hall, and sometimes we have minstrel shows. I was the interlocutor in the last one. Then we hold Ceremonial Dances - you should come over to see those sometimes - and we have our Inaugural Ball every two years.

Princess [Watawaso?] is getting rather old now. She was with the Winter Chantauqua for several seasons, and she writes and lectures. She is married to Bruce Poolaw, that Indian from Oklahoma. They are out in Hollywood now. The princess was married twice before. Her first husband dies. Her second, a doctor - and he was a very nice man - objected to her public life and after a time they were divorced. I guess she's getting all the public life she wants now with Poolaw." (I recently saw a picture in the paper of the princess and her youthful husband taken with the child star Mickey Rooney. Henry: "We used to have a fine band over here, but we haven't had one for several years now. There are still some fine musicians here though. The Indians seem to take to music naturally. I don't know why.

“Thirty years ago we had one of the finest choirs in the country here at St. Anne's. There were some very fine singers in that choir. Two of Horace Nelson's daughters - you met him here the other day - are in pictures in Hollywood. Their names are Alice and Winifred. Alice had a part in The Silent Enemy. A few of our Indian girls are training to be nurses.

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“One of our greatest heroes was, of course, [Sockalexis?], the famous ball player. Poor Sock! Drink and the women got the best of him. His cousin - Young Sock, we called him - achieved some fame by coming in second in an Olympic Marathon. Roland Nelson, under the name of Chief [Needabah?], is becoming well known as a master of ceremonies at Sportsmens' Shows. He writes and lectures, too.” Mrs. Mitchell: “The Indians have their folk songs, of course. Roland Nelson sang one about two years ago on one of Major [?] programs. That was a lullaby, or a cradle song, and he sang it in Indian. That is the trouble - the Indian folk songs, so far as I know, have never been translated. They wouldn't be much good to you unless they were in English. I belong to a club over here we call the Woman's club, and we'll have to discuss that sometime. I'll try to get some for you. Folklore is such a big subject that we couldn't very well take it up here. An entire book could be written about that. Interesting books could be written about many of the people who live here - or who have lived here - if any one had the time to do the work. There is [Sockalexis?] for example.” Henry: “Those old fellows had something that the younger generation lacks. The young fellows today seem to lack permanence. They don't think of tomorrow.”

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Mrs. Mitchell: “I guess that's true. I wish the whites could see some of the houses that they built here years ago. They are really fine houses that were made to last. There is a house on the other side (of the island) that was constructed with hand hewn beams. In place of sheathing paper under the clapboards they used birch bark.” Henry: “Yes, and instead of

laths, they used boards all of two feet wide and cut in a funny way. I don't know whey they were cut like that unless it was to hold the plaster.

Well, Mr. Grady, we've been all through this outline and I don't see what else we can do." Mrs. Mitchell: "They seem to place emphasis on living and working conditions." (The first time I called I left them my outline, Mr. Howe's letter to me, and a section of instruction papers so that they could understand better just what was wanted.) Henry: "Well, maybe if we'd had an outline adapted to an Indian Study we could have done better, but I don't see what else I could say. I spoke of the change in the school system and the trouble they had in the church. As far back as I can remember we've eaten the same foods. The only changes that have occurred in living conditions are that more people seem to want to have their houses fixed up better. I mentioned the water, the lights, and the radios.

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"I think that the radio and the movies have had a lot to do with improved living conditions. The Indians are always original, but they've great imitators, too. They young folks go over to the pictures and see Clark Gable or some one like him on the screen and they say to themselves, '[Gosh?], he wouldn't look any better than I do if I had a mustache and a better suit of clothes.' They listen to people sing and play and talk on the radio and they say, 'Phooey, I could do just as well if I had a chance.' They begin to respect themselves more, and they begin to want the things they see and hear about.

"In regard to working conditions I don't know what to say. I have this little job as a janitor now, and I don't get much money. People could always get a job when I was a young man, and although that is not true today, still I think working conditions have improved since I was young. We work fewer hours a day now, and employers admit we ought to get a little more than [mere?] living wages. Living wages today mean a lot more than they once did because people live better. The employers aren't exactly getting saintly, but they know it's

better for them to pay us well. The big trouble is now the lack of jobs. If the white man can fix that up they'll have something."